

THE FUTURE OF ASH TREES IN NEWSTEAD

There are 3 conditions possibly affecting ash trees here in Newstead: Emerald Ash Borer, Ash Decline, and Ash Yellows. Each “problem” is a serious threat to the longevity of ash trees here in town.

Emerald Ash Borer has been found in Tillman Swamp in Clarence within 3 miles of Newstead. It has also been found to the east in Pembroke. Does this mean it is inevitable in Newstead?

YES –BUT a question remains as to when. If the borers don’t receive human help, it could be many years. However, once they arrive, borers kill untreated trees they infest usually within five years.

Ash Decline is another problem with local ash trees. While not a disease itself it is the cause of many dead ash trees here in Newstead. It is thought that white ash trees voluntarily grow in local conditions not suitable for them. Severe drought or wet conditions occur and they succumb.

Ash Yellows is another disease thought to be here in Newstead. The ash yellows phytoplasm is thought to be transmitted via insects. It seems to attack both ash trees weakened by poor growing conditions and those apparently located in good situations. Unfortunately once infected there is no treatment and the tree slowly dies, perhaps over the course of ten years.

The EAB is an insect primarily spread over distances by man carrying it via firewood. The residents of Newstead must protect their and their neighbors’ ash trees by considering firewood purchase and use.

We **MUST** be very careful here. DEC law limits transporting firewood more than 50 miles. However, this can easily bring infected wood into our town since there are infestations close by. Unfortunately detecting an infestation in a tree may occur a number of years after the infestation actually began. Also known infected trees can be readily used as firewood. This makes it very likely infected wood is being transported in the area. The best solution is to use only very local firewood and attempt to not purchase any ash wood. **BURN IT WHERE IT GREW---SEE FIREWOOD INFO SHEET**

So what else should a property owner in Newstead do **besides do NOT plant ash trees?**

First: Learn to identify ash trees. Excellent online field guides are available under “Homeowner Information” at www.emeraldashborer.info. This website has plenty of other useful information. Also see the ash identification info sheet available at <http://www.nyis.info/pdf/ash%20ID.pdf>.

Second: Review the location of your property lines. No point in treating or removing a tree that is really on your neighbor’s property.

Next, consider what you want to do about the ash trees on your property. The EAB is a treatable problem. Ash decline and Ash Yellows are not. If the tree is of significant aesthetic or functional value to you, your best approach is to consult a certified arborist to assess the tree’s risk for each of the three ash tree problems. Based on his analysis of the situation there are three basic options 1. Do nothing. Let the infestation run its course. 2. Remove the tree before it dies. 3. If the concern is EAB treat the tree. If the concern is ash yellows, there is a possibility that by fertilizing and irrigating a tree it will be more resistant to disease.

Some questions to think about to help decide which option to use: What is the cost of doing nothing as opposed to taking action? How much value does it add to my property? How long will it take to replace it if it dies or I remove it? How attractive is it? How much shade does it provide? As with any other project which may alter your property, consult at least 3 reputable tree service professionals before choosing a treatment method and service.

Additional Information is available at the Newstead Town Hall and on its website. Also visit www.nyis.info. Purdue University provides assistance for establishing a management plan:

www.emeraldashborer.info/files/outoftheashes/SadoffEABCalculator.pdf. Indiana’s extension service provides a cost calculator at <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/treecomputer/v2beta/> which you may also find useful. Cornell Cooperative Extension provides a wealth of information at <http://www.newyorkinvasivespecies.org/insects/EmeraldAshBorer.aspx> including pictures of the insect in various life stages, but the maps are a bit out of date. To find the most recent maps, as well as a host of other information, consult DEC’s website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html>. Ash Yellows information at http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/howtos/ht_ash/ash_yell.pdf/

Additional Websites for information:

http://www.nyis.info/?action=eab_additional_general_info

If you have any questions or think you have an infected tree, call the Newstead Town Clerk’s office at 542-4573.